

THE BLUE SHEET

November/December 2005



EDITOR: MARCY HOIK

NEWS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE: THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE PROCESS HAS BEGUN

On November 4, 2005, the Legislators submitted their drafts of Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) to Legislative Services. This marks the first step of the Legislative process that results in the adoption of laws within the State of New Hampshire. The Governor's Commission on Disability, in conjunction with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC), the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), Sight Services for Independent Living, and Granite State Independent Living (GSIL), will be offering a Legislative Process Training on April 10, 2006, in Concord. This training will cover such topics as the process of how laws are created, how best to contact your legislator, tips on testifying, and how to use the NH Legislative Tools web site. For more information, or to register, contact Marcy at 603-271-5614.

The Governor's Commission on Disability's Legislative Review Committee will be meeting to go over the 2006 LSRs and determine which they will follow, support or oppose. During the upcoming year members of the committee will testify at hearings involving proposed legislation that may impact the community of people with disabilities. Once the committee has developed their "watch list", it will be available on the Commission's web site at www.nh.gov/disability. Watch for the

next edition of The Blue Sheet which will explain the Legislative Process, how to become more involved and give a brief overview of some of the LSRs the committee will be tracking over the next several months.

For a complete listing of the LSRs submitted, click on the following link, or type the text onto your web browser:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/ie/lsrsearch/default.asp>. As of this moment, full text has not been made available, but the following are a few that I will be reading as soon as they become available:

- 2006-H-2890-R: "relative to the emergency plan for service dogs and other animals."
- 2006-S-2910-L: "requiring translation services upon request for persons being interviewed by law enforcement and persons receiving medical treatment"
- 2006-H-2846-L: "relative to polling place arrangement and accessibility/"
- 2006-H-2758-R: "making an appropriation to increase the hourly rate of pay for care providers for persons with developmental and acquired disabilities."
- 2006-H-2722-R: "revising the special education statutes."
- 2006-H-2296-R: "reestablishing an autism registry in the Department of Health and Human Services."
- 2006-H-2119-R: "establishing a committee to study the effects of willful, habitual misconduct by individuals on their subsequent well-being which may impose a burden on public funds."

MY.MEDICARE.GOV – NATIONAL ROLLOUT UNDERWAY

My.Medicare.gov – the Medicare Beneficiary Portal is an internet portal allowing registered beneficiaries the ability to view entitlement, enrollment, deductible, and address of record information. Additionally, it provides beneficiaries with the preventive service information and the option for web chat assistance for any technical questions.

My.Medicare.gov is currently in the fifth phase of a national rollout to be completed in November 2005. At present, the Medical Beneficiary Portal is available to beneficiaries in several states, including New Hampshire.

Starting January 1, 2006, new Medicare prescription Drug coverage will be available to everyone with Medicare, regardless of income, health status, or how you pay for prescription drugs today. If you want to join a prescription drug plan that adds coverage to the Original Medicare Plan (and some Medicare cost plans and Medicare Private Fee for Service plans), visit the Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder at www.medicare.gov/MPDPF/Public/Home.asp.

Medicare beneficiaries who don't use the Internet can call 1-800 MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

The Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Finder will compare Medicare prescription drug plans in your area. Additional information will be coming soon.

Benefits of the new Medicare prescription drug coverage:

- Almost 1 in 3 people will qualify for help in paying for their drug costs.
- It protects you against ever having very high drug expenses.
- It will pay for about half your drug costs.
- It pays for brand name and generic drugs.
- It is available to all people with Medicare.

ON THE DOWNLOAD:

REVIEWS OF WEB-RELATED AND OTHER INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, (EEOC), www.eeoc.gov: The EEOC offers technical assistance on the ADA provisions applying to employment. They can be contacted by mail at U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, P.O. Box 7033, Lawrence, KS 66044, or by phone at 800-669-4000.
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN), www.jan.wvu.edu: JAN is funded by the Department of Labor to provide advise on accommodating employees with disabilities. Click or call for more information 800-526-7234 (V/TTY).
- Best Buddies International, www.bestbuddies.org/home.asp: Best Buddies is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities by providing opportunities for one-to-one friendships and integrated employment. Global Headquarters for Best Buddies is located at 100 Southeast Second Street, Suite 2200, Miami, FL 33131, and can be reached toll free at 800-89-BUDDY (800-892-8339).
- www.DisabilityInfo.Gov was honored for Outstanding Citizen-focused Services in September 2005. DisabilityInfo.gov was created as a part of President Bush's New Freedom Initiative. It provides people with disabilities easy access to the information and resources they need to live full, independent lives.

INTERSECTION: NAVIGATING THE ROAD TO WORK

Intersection is an electronic newsletter of the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), funded under a grant supported by the Office of Disability Employment Policy of the US Dept of Labor.

The newsletter and website offer information to improve services to youth and especially youth with disabilities. Recently, the NCWD/Youth announced the launch of Pro-Bank, an online database of promising programs and practices in the workforce development system that effectively addresses the needs of youth with disabilities.

Pro-Bank was established to:

- Provide you with easily accessible information about promising practices through a trusted resource;
- Supply you with information that can be used to improve products and services within your own programs; and
- Promote quality program services to youth with disabilities throughout the workforce development system.

Programs featured on this site fall into two categories:

The first highlights effective and promising practices derived from youth-focused pilot demonstration projects funded by the United States Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

The second category showcases programs not funded by ODEP which are inclusive of youth with disabilities or which specifically serve youth with disabilities and which have a proven record of success. (Excerpted from Intersection v.2 no. 9)

A WORD FROM THE CLIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP)

– PAMELA PRESCOTT

In New Hampshire, the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is available to consumers of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SBVI), Granite State Independent Living (GSIL) and various other community rehabilitation programs or anyone interested in applying for services from those programs. It may be of special interest to students who are making their plans for transition from school to adulthood and work.

CAP provides information and referral to anyone to facilitate access to services and benefits available in New Hampshire and to educate the public about those services. The "VR Bill of Rights" emphasizes consumer rights. The Client Assistance Program also publishes a "CAP Guide to VR Services", available at our website at www.state.nh.us/disability/caphomepage.html.

For a copy of this publication, or if you would like more information, contact the CAP Ombudsman Bill Hagy at Tel: (603) 271-4176 or (800) 852-3405 (Voice or TTY).

“THE VR BILL OF RIGHTS”

You have the right to:

1. a determination of eligibility within 60 days of your application.
2. develop your own Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).
3. determine what your vocational objective will be.
4. choose the services and service providers in your IPE.
5. receive the full scope of services necessary to assist you in achieving your vocational objective.
6. amend your IPE to change your vocational objective or services provided.
7. a review of your IPE at least once per year.
8. be assisted by the Client Assistance Program.
9. review the VR Policy Manual.
10. appeal any decision made by VR.

WHAT IS THE EASYLIVING HOME PROGRAM?

EasyLiving™ Home is the nation's first voluntary certification program that specifies criteria in everyday construction to add convenience in your new home and to welcome all friends, family and visitors regardless of age, size or physical ability. It sounds so simple, yet these small changes create key lifestyle benefits for homeowners – a home not only easy to live in, but also: Easy to build; Easy to visit; Easy to sell.

The EasyLiving™ Home program has been developed by a Georgia coalition of public and private organizations to encourage the voluntary inclusion of key features that make a home cost effective, accessible and convenient for everyone without sacrificing style or adding substantial construction costs.

EasyLiving™ Home certification enhances both the initial and resale value of a home, and can be achieved for practically any home regardless of price, building site or architecture. New Hampshire is one of the first states to duplicate the program.

The EasyLiving™ Home – NH coalition was developed by members of the NH Governor's Commission on Disability Housing Committee and other organizations that serve people with disabilities or are involved in residential construction and sales. The NH Developmental Disabilities Council (DDC) provided the start-up grant, which will be administered by Granite State Independent Living (GSIL). To learn more about how the program can benefit

you, contact Patricia Piet at (800) 826-3700 ext 128 or via email at Patricia.Vincent@gsil.org.

NFB NH HOLDS ITS 49TH ANNUAL CONVENTION

The National Federation of the Blind of NH will hold its 49th Annual Convention on Friday and Saturday, November 18&19, 2005 at the Holiday Inn in Concord. The focus is "Discovering the Possibilities: A World of Opportunities". For more information, to register for the conference or to purchase banquet tickets, contact State President Bruce Gillis at (603) 524-1945 or State Treasurer Lucille Lynch at (603) 627-7965.

ACCESSIBLE FREEDOM WEAVERS STUDIO OPEN IN CONCORD

VSA arts of New Hampshire recently opened FreedomWeavers Studio at 35 South Main Street, Concord, NH (located at Kallico Pottery Designs Creative Arts Studio.) This creative expression weaving center is for all people, all ages, and all abilities. FreedomWeavers is a program of VSA arts of New Hampshire, a non-profit organization celebrating its 20th year of creating a community where people with disabilities can learn through, participate in, and enjoy the arts.

The work of FreedomWeavers Studio is based on the Saori method created in the late 1960s by VSA arts of Japan. Saori weaving has been done in Japan for over 35 years and currently is used as a productive, sociable activity and income source for over 10,000 people with disabilities in that country.

Bobbie Herron, of VSA arts of New Hampshire, is the Saori coach and teacher here in New Hampshire. Classes are affordably priced, and six looms are waiting for enthusiastic explorers. Hours to start will be Thursday evenings from 6-9pm and Saturdays from 2-5pm.

Call in advance to reserve your space, or simply stop by for a visit and learn the story of how this Saori movement began. All are welcome to attend, parents, children, families, seniors, people with and without disabilities, medical and social service providers, and anyone who is looking for a creative outlet where preplanning is not important, you are free to explore color and texture, you can change you mind often, and where individuality is celebrated.

For further information about this or any aspect of VSA arts of NH please call them at Tel: (603) 228-4330 or e-mail at: info@vsaartsnh.org

A QUICK NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Well, the holidays are here again! I am excited to announce that on December 1st at 11:00a.m., we will be presenting our Monthly ADA Celebration from the Steeplegate Mall in Concord, NH. I look forward to meeting some of you there.

With the New Year comes a new batch of proposed legislation! Our next issue will be a Legislative Edition, including basics for those new to this process, as well as a sneak peak into the legislation the Commission will be tracking. If you should have any comments, suggestions, items of interest, or events that you would like addressed or included, please forward them to me at the Contact information listed below. I look forward to receiving your feedback.

Address questions and comments to Marcy Hoik, c/o The Governor's Commission on Disability, 57 Regional Drive, Concord, NH 03301, Tel: 271-5614 or (800) 852-3405 toll free in New Hampshire (Voice or TTY). E-mail: Marcy.Hoik@nh.gov

Happy Reading;

Marcy E. Hoik